

# **Paisley Abbey**



## **Abbey Herald**

**May 2022**

Some of you will know that I spent a great deal of my childhood on the island of Coll. Coll has been designated a ‘dark-sky’ island because you are guaranteed clear vistas of the night sky unspoilt by light pollution. The moon and stars shine so brightly that the constellations can easily be found. Orion with his belt, the Plough and many signs of the zodiac. Once you know that they are there, then they are relatively easy to find again. It can, though, come as a bit of a shock to remember that they are not actually there, not as we see them. The light from the stars takes many, many years to reach the earth. We see the stars as they were long ago, not as they are now. The shapes and patterns of the stars are only there because of where we are standing, from another angle they would look completely different, as the world tilts. There are endless possibilities for shapes and patterns in the universe and our perspective is not fixed and eternal.

Sometimes, things happen that seem to tilt the world on its axis, to make familiar patterns shift, and something new emerge. Such an event is the ascension of Jesus which we celebrate at the end of May.

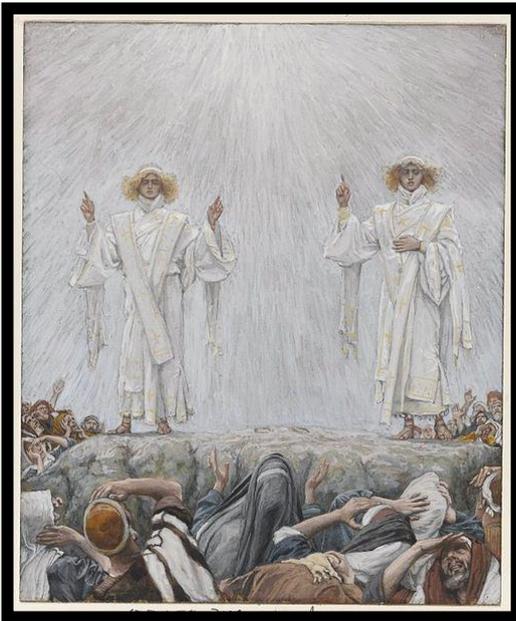
What exactly did the disciples see that first Ascension Day? Luke describes it in two ways, once at the end of his Gospel and then again at the beginning of Acts. Both stories are clear that Jesus was there and then he wasn’t. They imply that there is a certain amount of mystery about what exactly happened. But what we do know is that the world changed for the disciples. Everything had seemed to come to an end with Jesus’ death but then came the resurrection and suddenly all the possibilities were opened up again. It took a while for the disciples to realise that this time it would not be Jesus preaching and teaching and healing, but it would be them. And that is what the ascension is. It is the handing over. Now it is the turn of the disciples to bring about God’s kingdom.

At the beginning of the book of Acts, two men dressed in white ask the disciples ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking

up toward heaven?'. The disciples turn away from looking upwards and their perspective shifts. Instead, they look towards the world, the world that needs to hear the good news. Everything looks different now, the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus have changed their standpoint.

With his ascension, Christ tilts the universe and has handed over his mission to humanity. With the disciples, we stop looking up to heaven, waiting for Jesus to come and rescue us. Rather, we focus our gaze towards our world, looking for God there, and seeking to play our part in bringing about God's kingdom here on earth.

Elspeth



## **PARISH REGISTER FOR APRIL 2022**

### **Baptism**

17 April          Ruby Richmond Stewart

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **SATURDAY RECITALS**

There will be Saturday Lunchtime Recitals in May and June.

Saturday 21 May at 12.30pm there will be an organ recital by David J. Smith, and it will include organ music by Bach and Mendelssohn and some improvisation.

This will be followed on 11 June by an organ recital by our assistant organist Mr Peter Shepherd.

### **ART EXHIBITION**

There will be an Art Exhibition in the Abbey featuring the work of Audrey Hawthorne, artist and former member of the Abbey choir. It will run from 28th May to the 25th of June. Audrey's work is predominantly in water colour and floral in nature. Half of the proceeds will go to Abbey funds.

## **ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING**

**The Stated Annual Meeting** will take place after the morning service on Sunday 12 June.

All members are invited to attend the meeting when the Abbey's Annual Accounts for 2021 will be presented and there will be the opportunity for questions.

## **FOODBANK**

The next collection will be on Sunday 29 May.  
Shortages are cleaning materials, jam and biscuits.  
Thanks to all who donate.

M. Sharp

## **CHRISTIAN AID**

### **Christian Aid Week 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022**

The Parish and Community Committee are having a Soup, Bread and Cheese Lunch on **Sunday 15 May** at 12.30pm after the Morning service.

The proceeds of the lunch will go to support the work of Christian Aid.

Please support the lunch and Christian Aid.  
Thank you

## **“NO TIME FOR TURNING BACK”**

The Very Revd. John Chalmers explains why change is necessary for every part of the life of the Church of Scotland”

A year in the life of the Church of Scotland has turned and in what seems like the blink of an eye we are preparing for another General Assembly.

After more than 40 years, this may be the last time that I must set aside the third week in May for the Kirk’s annual meeting. There is something in me that knows I will miss it but there is also something else in me that questions whether this format of Church governance is fit for purpose in the present day.

There is a huge complexity associated with the renewal of almost every part of our Church life. In 2019, through the receipt of a Radical Action Plan and the subsequent work of a Special Commission – a wake-up call for reformation in every part of our life was issued. The urgent need was for the proper mission planning to happen in every Presbytery. Now, every single issue which is causing discomfort across the Church is a result of beginning to implement actions which were long overdue.

From the reform of the way in which we recruit and prepare people for ministry to the overhaul of our financial contribution system; from the structure of our Presbyteries to the deployment of our ministries, every lever is being pulled at the same time and it is not proving to be easy, its s hardly a fit comparison but there are shades of the ancient story of the children of Israel escaping from Egypt. They had only got so far on the journey when their uncertain circumstances prompted ideas of turning back. The promise, however did not belong in turning back; instead, it belonged in continuing the journey. In 40 years of General Assemblies, I have never felt quite as close as we are now to a sense of realism about our life as part of God’s Church. We are

not there yet but despite the difficulties involved in this journey this is no time for turning back.

Over the years the Church of Scotland may have drifted into a too comfortable institutional framework which is difficult to change. For years we have repeated the annual cycle of Church life but now, like a modern-day Rip Van Winkle, we have wakened to a very different world which needs a very different approach to ministry, mission, governance, management and accountability.

One of Jesus' most challenging insights is found in Matthew 9: 16-17 where he says "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

Jesus could see how the religious structures of his day could not contain the force of the spirit that he was announcing. Jesus' gift was that of challenging people to look beyond religious structures to find faith where it might be least expected. And Jesus knew that, while tradition could be an important cradle of truth, there were times when it could not contain the new thing that God was doing.

The complexity of the transformation need in the life of the Church of Scotland is such that no part of who we are and what we do can escape scrutiny and reform. We have started on the process, but the work is far from complete. We have placed many aspects of our life under the microscope, but if we are serious about being a Church which is both relevant and respected, then we need to remember that we won't get away with stitching new patches onto old cloth or trying to put new wine into old wineskins.

*This article first appeared in the May 2022 issue of Life and Work.*

## **SOMETHING TO MAKE YOU SMILE**

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### **Divine Intervention?**

A little boy was playing outside with his mother's broom in the garden.

That night his mother realised her broom was still missing and asked her son to go out and bring it in.

When the little boy confessed, he was afraid of the dark, his mother tried to comfort him: 'The Lord is out there too, don't be afraid.'

Hesitantly, the little boy opened the back door and peered out.

He called softly: 'Lord, since you're out there already, please will you pass me the broom?'

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### **Lot's wife**

A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. 'The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.'

His son looked up, concerned. 'What happened to the flea?'

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What do you call a knife that cuts 4 loaves of Irish bread at once...?

A four-loaf cleaver!

## MUSIC FOR MAY

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### 1 May 2022

11.00 am

Psalm 30

Anthem

### Easter 3

Morning Service

Laudate Dominum

Dupré

### 8 May 2022

11,00 am

Psalm 23

Jubilate Deo (Jauchzet dem Herrn)

Anthem

### Easter 4

Morning Service

My Shepherd is the living God

Schütz

McPhee

4.00 pm

Responses

Psalms 113, 114

Canticles

Anthem

Choral Evensong

Smith of Durham

Rubbra in Ab

The Lord is my Shepherd

Lennox Berkeley

### 15 May 2022

11.00 am

The Lord bless you and keep you

Psalm 148

Anthem

### Easter 5

Morning Service

McPhee

And I saw a new heaven

Bainton

### 22 May 2022

11.00 am

Psalm 67

Benedictus

Anthem

### Easter 6

Morning Service

McPhee

O taste and see Vaughan Williams

**29 May 2022**

11.00 am  
Communion Setting  
Psalm 97  
Anthem

**Sunday after Ascension Day**

Holy Communion  
Vierne (Messe Solennel)

God is gone up                      Finzi

**2 June 2022**

9.45 pm  
Anthem

**Queen's Platinum Jubilee  
Celebration**

A life lived with grace      Chinemelu

**5 June 2022**

11.00am  
Introit  
Psalm 104  
Anthem

Day of Pentecost

If ye love me                      Tallis

Loquebantur varilis linguis  
Tallis

## **ABBEY DIRECTORY**

**Minister:** Rev. Elspeth McKay 0141 889 7654

**Director of Music:** Dr. George McPhee

**Assistant Organist:** Mr Peter Shepherd

**Church Manager** Linda Barrett 0141 889 7654

**Church Secretary:** Mrs Karen Kerr 0141 889 7654

**Session Clerk:** Mrs Marion Sommerville

**Treasurer”** Mr Stewart McDougall

The Abbey office is not manned every day just now so if you need to contact any of the above people leave a message on the office answering machine (0141 889 7654) and it will be passed on to the appropriate person. Thank you



